



## News Release

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For Immediate Release  
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### **Health Data Committee Releases New Hospital Comparison Report** *Focus is on heart care, Utah hospitals perform well*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Making the right health care choices can be difficult, but a new and helpful resource is now available for consumers and their families. The *Utah Hospital Comparison Report on Heart Surgeries and Conditions for Years 2002-2004*, released today by the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) Health Data Committee, compares Utah's hospitals in heart care based on charges, quality and patient safety. A copy of the report can be found at [www.health.utah.gov/myhealthcare](http://www.health.utah.gov/myhealthcare).

"The Department is committed to publishing reports that will enable patients and families to become more actively involved in their health care," said Dr. David N. Sundwall, executive director, UDOH. "The heart report is the second in a series specifically designed for consumers."

Information in the report includes comparisons of hospital performance factors such as in-hospital mortality, average charges, length-of-stay, and how frequently each hospital performs specific heart procedures. "Our consumer reports can help you make better choices about the health care you receive before selecting a hospital or when evaluating a current provider," said Clark Hinckley, Chairman of the Health Data Committee.

The report includes two main sections. Data in the first section examines quality and safety ratings for common heart procedures. In 2002-2004, all Utah hospitals had about as many in-hospital deaths as other U.S. hospitals for heart bypass surgery and balloon angioplasty for the kind of patients they treated. Most, but not all, Utah hospitals performed as well as other U.S. hospitals in treating heart attack and heart failure patients. Hospitals that treated less than 30 patients for these procedures and conditions did not receive a rating in the report.

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In the second section, readers can compare average hospital charges for different kinds of heart care in 2004. For example, the lowest average charge for treating patients having coronary heart bypass surgery (CABG) with cardiac catheterization and minor or moderate illness among Utah hospitals was \$40,278, whereas the highest average charge for the same procedure was \$63,558. As noted in the report, hospital charge differs from cost, price and hospital reimbursement. Many factors can affect how much a patient pays for heart treatment including whether you have health insurance, the type of insurance and billing procedures at the hospital.

Readers of the report are also pointed to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Hospital Compare web site at [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov). Hospital Compare allows consumers to learn how often their local hospitals deliver specific treatments to their patients. Medical research has shown that these treatments produce the best chance of surviving and recovering from heart attacks, heart failure and other serious conditions. *HealthInsight*, a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health care system, uses these measures to provide rankings of Utah hospitals and those around the nation.

The 2005 State Legislature unanimously passed Senate Bill 132 requiring the Health Data Committee to publish annual reports that compare hospitals in the areas of charges, quality and patient safety. Before end of 2006, the Committee plans to release three more hospital comparative reports, which will address areas such as common elective surgeries and pneumonia hospitalization.

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., Director of the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), has saluted Utah's efforts. "AHRQ views public reporting as one important strategy to advance the quality improvement agenda in health care," Dr. Clancy said. "Evidence shows that publicly reporting performance by specific hospitals is a key element that promotes enhanced patient care."

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*